

Saturday, December 13, 2008

## Irish Examiner Monday

**The devil wears nada**  
Get thin or die trying  
— that was the credo at

the woman's  
magazine  
where  
author  
Valerie  
Frankel  
worked  
Features



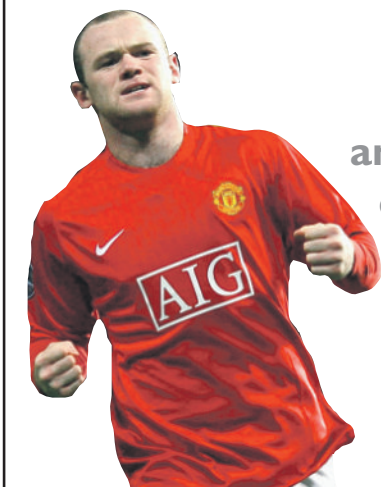
**Best fishes**  
Gift ideas at  
the Christmas  
art shows  
Arts



**Vanquishing  
the vice**  
'As the  
first wafts  
of tobacco smoke  
drifted through  
from the sitting  
room the party  
really began to  
smell like a party'  
The Last Word



**Champions**  
Action and  
analysis from  
every game  
in the  
Premier  
League  
Sport



**BERRY BERRY:** A blackbird prepares to gobble a berry in Derryclare, Co Galway.

Picture: Sheena Jolley

## Fur flies as Santa gets cat-nipped

USA: A Santa was attacked by a pet cat after posing with it on his lap for a picture.

Jonathan Bebbington was the star of a Santa Paws photo event at a PetsMart store in New Jersey when he was bitten on the wrist and hand.

The cat and owner disappeared after the incident. "Her last words were 'I have a permit and the cat has all his vaccines'," the Santa said.



worldapart

ENGLAND: Postal workers have complained they were being pressured into walking faster to complete their rounds under cost-saving measures.

The Communication Workers Union said delivery staff were being told to walk at a speed of 6km/h, an increase over a previous target of 4km/h.

The union said workers were being pressed to complete "unrealistic" rounds to gain financial savings. The Royal Mail denied the union's claims.

ENGLAND: A shopkeeper thwarted armed robbers with just a cup of tea, police said.

Two masked men, one armed with a knife, tried to steal a till from a village store in Bedfordshire.

But they were forced to flee empty handed when the owner, Varsha Patel threw her mug of tea in the face of one and then hit the other in the face with the empty mug.

ENGLAND: For 800 years Malmesbury Abbey has been a holy site for worshippers to make their pilgrimage for religious silence.

But the sound of skateboards will soon echo throughout the ancient monument when it is turned into a skatepark.

Church elders, including the Bishop of Bristol, are supporting the idea to clear the pews from the Abbey and replace them with skate ramps.

The abbey will be turned into an indoor skatepark for three days from February 18, along with a cafe and a live music stage.

ENGLAND: Security staff at a hospital are believed to be the first in Britain to use head cameras to help prosecute

violent and abusive patients. Staff at Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust are now wearing the state-of-the-art surveillance technology to make the wards safer.

Each officer will wear a small camera on their shoulder which will be turned on when attending a call-out. The head cameras cost £10,000 (£11,000).

USA: A teenager was stabbed by an enraged BMW driver as he waited for a school bus in New York for putting his backpack on the car's bonnet.

Gabriel Quinones put the bag on the parked 2005 grey BMW X5 to take out a book.

The driver got out of the car, and the pair argued before the motorist pulled a knife and stabbed the boy six times in the head, chest and arm.

USA: There was a patchy response to a call by gay activists in San Francisco for workers to strike by "calling in gay" in support of same-sex marriage laws.

The protest, which a gay couple organised through the internet, was designed to demonstrate the economic clout of same-sex marriage supporters.

USA: A 50-year-old man who told authorities he was fed up with teens toilet-papering his house decided to defend his property — with a squirt gun filled with fox urine. Now, Scott Wagar is in trouble with the law.

Wagar pleaded not guilty in Kandiyo County District Court to misdemeanour assault and other charges. He was released on personal recognisance.

## 'Tis the season for a few cheap laughs

**C**OPS are, famously, trained to do a mental inventory of everyone they meet. While they crush your phalanges in that merciless cop grip and repeat your name aloud (another memory trick), they're filing away your appearance: 5'7", 20lb overweight, sticky-out ears, green not her colour (for they are also famously fashion-conscious).

This reportedly becomes an automatic, involuntary process: they can't turn it off. Ever. Even at home. Even on holiday. Even at Christmas. Even at the most, ah, intimate and delicate of moments, at times when conscious thought cedes to pure sensual feeling, in the highest transports of passion ("sex" is what we're trying to say here). Even then that ceaseless inner voice continues, recording every detail. Mole on left buttock. Hairy armpits. Slight smell of rabbit.

The same applies for other professions, of course.

Doctors can't help noticing signs of ill-health at the hospital Christmas do. Firemen sigh over blocked emergency exits at every party of the season. The undertakers and politicians at midnight Mass can tell your height at a glance: the former to fit you for a casket, the latter to judge if you're worth stepping on.

Bouncers go home to Christmas dinner and sneer at their kid sisters, asking sarcastically if she's cold in that skirt. Car salesmen, vomiting incessantly after an undercooked turkey, swear to A&E triage nurses that this belly's as good as new, just been serviced, only 30k on the clock, he can do you a deal. Clampers twitch and convulse like Dr Strangelove when the January sales traffic slows.

Recruitment consultants relax with family over Scrabble, eyes popping from their heads at Granny's score-keeping skills; two weeks later, the confused old dear is obligingly interviewing for that



**Hugh Tynan**

The Last Word

vacant head of finance post at Commerzbank IFSC. Telemarketers make (and record) those traditional catch-up Christmas calls to their cousins, requesting dully that they rate their cards on a scale of five (very satisfied) to one (very disappointed), and then putting them on hold.

Santa continues his compulsive monitoring of children's behaviour, even after the gifts have been delivered. Jesus dons a disguise and joins the hardy souls at Dublin's 40-Foot Christmas Day swim, but can't turn off his training and causes quite an alarm with his inadvertent water-walking.

And in the glamorous, not-at-all-grubby world of the media, Examiner Last Word columnists persist in trying to wring a few cheap laughs from offensive generalisations while also permitting a note of Christmas sentiment to sneak in.

What sentiment? The Santa and Jesus stuff, of course. Oh yeah, which reminds me: take a jump, Broadcasting Commission of Ireland. Veritas rules!

**Callaghan LEISURE FITNESS & LEISURE EQUIPMENT**

**NordicTrack**  
Live the Adventure

**€2499**

**ProForm Wellness**  
**€799**

**Treadmills From €599**

**Large stock ready for delivery before Christmas.**

**VISIT OUR SHOWROOMS FOR FURTHER SPECIAL OFFERS**  
O'Callaghan Leisure Ltd.  
6 Karlbroom Enterprise Park,  
Doughcloyne Industrial Est., Wilton, Cork.  
Tel: 021 434 80 80 | Fax: 021 434 82 20

**website: www.ocallaghanleisure.com**

**Magners League 4 Match Package**  
Leinster, Connacht, Ulster & Ospreys

**THOMOND PARK STADIUM**  
YOUR ULTIMATE VENUE

**Limited packages available**  
For pricing & information go to [www.Munsterrugby.ie](http://www.Munsterrugby.ie)  
Ticket Office or call Ticket Hotline 081 836 5555 / 061 421103